

Guidance for Private Providers and Facilities Operated by Private Providers
COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
March 31, 2020

The following guidance is based on the most current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) recommendations for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. This guidance is not intended to address every potential scenario that may arise as this event evolves.

Guidance for visitation to residential facilities operated by private providers

- All visitor and volunteer access to residential facilities is suspended through at least April 30, 2020. DCS will determine at that time whether the suspension needs to be extended.
- Attorneys representing the youth, medical personnel, and vendors delivering supplies are exempt from this suspension.
- Suspension of this visitation applies to facilities that serve both delinquent and dependent and neglected youth.
- Following guidance from the CDC, DCS strongly urges private providers who operate residential treatment facilities to conduct COVID-19 symptom and temperature checks on all employees and other essential personnel prior to entry into their facilities. Per CDC guidelines, those running a temperature of 100.4 or higher should not be permitted to enter the facilities.
- DCS is urging all providers to follow CDC guidelines regarding limiting social interactions that could potentially expose custodial youth to COVID-19.

Guidance for DCS staff making visits with youth in provider facilities

- DCS will utilize videoconferencing to meet visitation requirements unless there are safety concerns, no video capability, or other circumstances that warrant a face-to-face visit.
- If DCS staff may make face-to-visits at the facility, CDC and TDH guidelines, as well as any provider guidelines, will be followed.

Guidance regarding transportation of youth

- If youth must be transported for court appearances, medical exams, or other essential appointments, the department strongly urges sanitizing the vehicles before and after transportations occur.

Guidance regarding week-end home passes and family visits

- For the period between the issuance of this document and April 30, 2020, no passes will be granted, unless a court order requiring face to face contact is in place. In this case, contact the FSW to consult with Legal regarding next steps for an agreed order and/or amended court order, etc. DCS staff will have responsibility for advising families of the temporary restriction. Please note: A Court Order **cannot** be violated and must be adhered to until DCS Legal advises otherwise. When visits do occur via videoconferencing, please provide a space for the youth where they can participate that provides quiet and confidentiality.

- Sibling visits and Parent/Child visits will occur via videoconferencing unless there is a court order requiring a face to face contact. In this case, contact the FSW to consult with Legal regarding next steps for an agreed order and/or amended court order, etc. Please note: A Court Order **cannot** be violated and must be adhered to until DCS Legal advises otherwise. When visits do occur via videoconferencing, please provide a space for the youth where they can participate that provides quiet and confidentiality.

Guidance regarding court appearances

- From the date of this document through the end of April 30, 2020, if the child/youth has a pending court date, providers should check with the case manager to ensure that the court date has not been re-scheduled.
- If transportation to court must be made, please refer to the guidance above on transportation of youth.

Guidance regarding factors to consider when providing services video conferencing vs. face-to-face

- Screen the individual to determine whether videoconferencing services are appropriate.
- When continued safety concerns exist in the home, the visit should occur face-to-face after the appropriate screening questions have been asked.
- When a youth is transitioning to a trial home visit from an out-of-home placement, the youth should be seen face-to-face, rather than videoconferencing, to assess safety. CDC guidelines should be followed.
- Assess the individual's ability to utilize technology resources for a videoconference – e.g. webcam or smartphone?
- At minimum obtain verbal consent for services will be accepted during this time.

Guidance on reporting

- Providers will report to the DCS Executive Director of Network Development, Camille Legins (camille.legins@tn.gov) if any custodial child is exposed to, exhibits symptoms of, or is being tested for COVID-19.